



DATE: November 9, 2009

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Mary Lilly Smith, ^{MS} Economic Development Director

RE: Department of Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative (HUD EDI) Special Purpose Grants

Background

Over the course of four years, the City of Springfield received federal appropriations to build a community multipurpose facility in the Jordan Valley Park area. These appropriations were placed by Congressman Roy Blunt at the request of the City. The four grants, placed in federal fiscal years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006, totaled \$2,194,925. These funds may only be used for the purpose noted in the Federal Appropriations bill and further defined in grant agreements between the City and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The funds are time-limited. The first grant will expire and unspent funds recaptured in September 2010. Subsequent grants will expire 2011, 2012, and 2013. Previous Councils were briefed on these grants. There has been little activity in the past two years and we thought it was important to provide this background to the current Council.

The City of Springfield intended to use these funds within Jordan Valley to assist in the design and construction of a multipurpose facility (arena) that would be located adjacent to the Exposition Center. The intent was to construct a facility that could accommodate concerts, conventions, and other events.

Since the City received these grants, Missouri State University has completed the construction of the JQH Arena, a few block south of the proposed community multipurpose facility location. Construction of the "Q" freed up the old Hammons Student Center for some community events. In 2006, the City and Missouri State University entered into an agreement wherein the Student Center will be available for community events. The agreement also provided that the City will not pursue construction of an alternative facility. The City has since sold the community multipurpose facility lot to a private developer.

In the Fall of 2007, the City received an administrative determination from HUD that these funds could be used on design and construction of multiple community multipurpose facilities in the East Meadows and Quarry Site areas of Jordan Valley Park.

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Our intent for the East Meadows section was to acquire the Commercial Metals property and rehabilitate an existing structure as an amphitheater, provide seating, restrooms, etc. After several years of negotiation, we have determined that we will not be able to acquire this property because the cost would be too great. The funds reserved for this acquisition were used to acquire Springfield Mill and Lumber.

Quarry Site

In 2007, HUD rendered an administrative determination that the community multipurpose facility funds could be used for improvements to the Quarry Site consistent with the original grant purpose. The proposed Quarry Site development will consist of a Gateway/Entryway feature that will include plazas for Springfield's sister cities, Tlaquepaque, Mexico and Isesaki, Japan, and an area of open space for outdoor community events. It is intended that this area, including the Gateway/Entryway feature, will accommodate both formal and informal community events. It is estimated that, when completed, approximately 3,000 individuals could be easily accommodated within the open space area. Due to environmental and settling concerns, the project will have to be phased. The first phase of construction, to be funded by the HUD EDI Grant, will be limited to the south third of the site where settling is less severe. This phase will include site grading, landscaping, fencing, a small parking lot, and installation of a gas flare to address the methane found in the quarry. We have completed due diligence activities on the Quarry Site, including environmental testing and design concepts. We anticipate construction beginning in late Spring 2010 on the Quarry Site facility.

Park Central Square

The City had reserved the majority of the grant funds for use on the East Meadows/Commercial Metals project. Since we will not be acquiring that property, we would like to request permission from HUD to use that portion of the funding on an alternative project.

In looking at the original purpose of the grant funding – to construct a community multipurpose facility – staff has identified the renovation of Park Central Square to be the City project that most closely aligns with the intent of the grant funding.

Park Central Square is at the center of the historic downtown and at the midpoint of Jordan Valley Park. It serves as a community gathering place and hosts a variety of functions, including concerts, farmers markets, religious and political gatherings, parades, and other celebrations. The Square is the focal point of the City and provides a common ground for people of all persuasions to comfortably gather. Of all of the public spaces in Springfield, it most closely fits the appellation of "community multipurpose facility". It can accommodate approximately 3,000 to 5,000 persons at concerts and family events. The Square has been redesigned at least seven times, the most recent a design by noted landscape architect Lawrence Halprin (designer of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt National Memorial in Washington, D.C.) in 1972. The Halprin design has been substantially modified over the past 30+ years. Many of the modifications have served to make the

Square less accessible and less conducive to community functions. Our goal with this funding is to restore the original Halprin design as much as possible, while incorporating modern disabled accessibility. If funding permits, funds may also be used to equip a community room adjacent to Park Central Square to complement and enhance the community multipurpose function.

As you know, a three-phase renovation project has been developed for the Square. Phase 1 was originally intended to be renovation of the interior Square, with the exterior sidewalks as Phase 2 and the "spokes" as Phase 3. The City planned to use federal transportation enhancement funds for the interior Square, but encountered issues with the proposed design, the significance of the Halprin design, and the need to execute the renovation in a timely manner. Council previously decided to spend the enhancement funds on Phase 2 of the project first and delay renovation of the interior. Using the HUD EDI funding will allow the City to proceed with renovation of the Square interior. We will modify the previously prepared plans to honor the Halprin design as much as possible and to modernize the functionality of the Square.

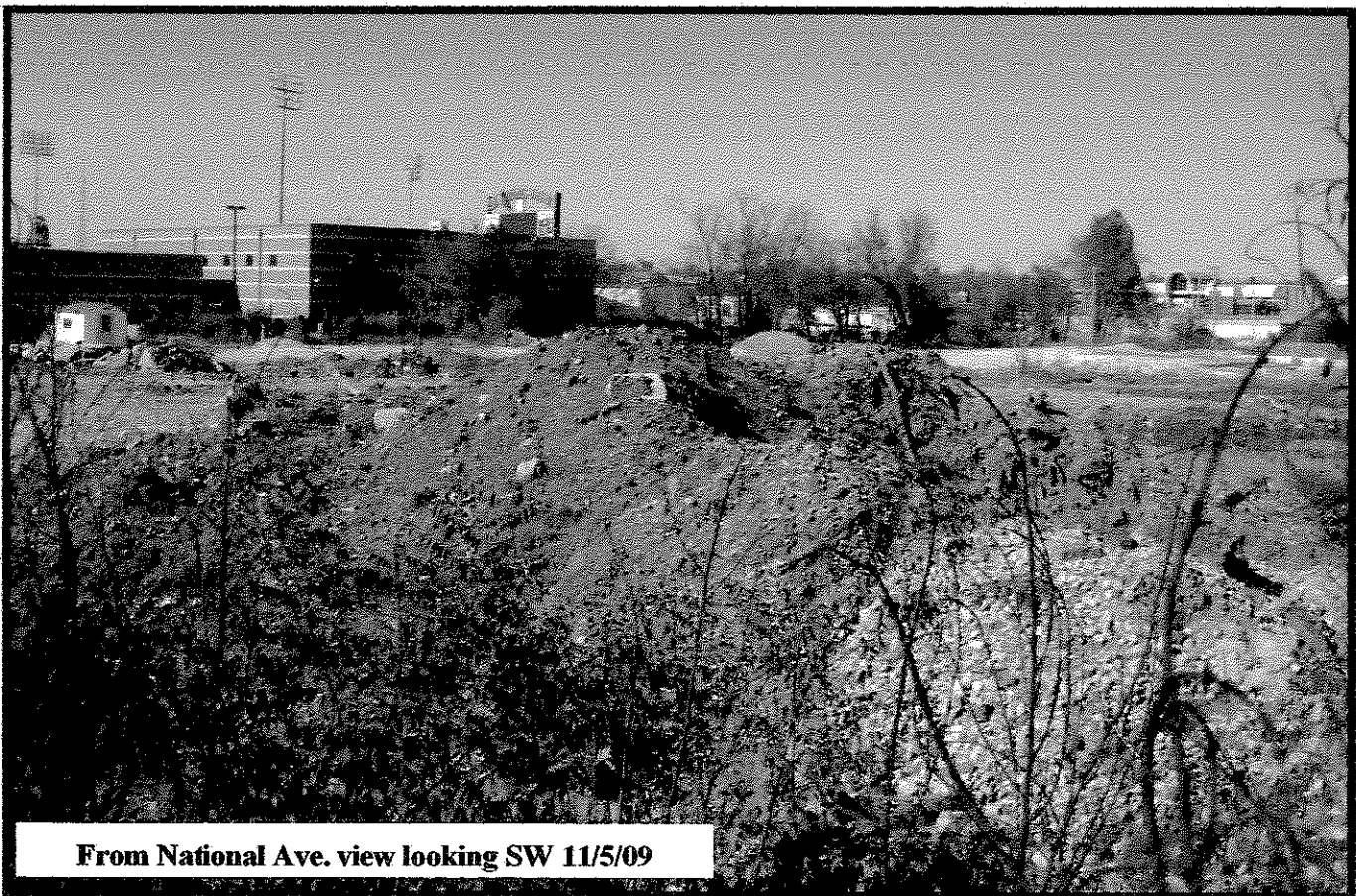
It is important to seek the administrative determination in the very near future because of the time constraint on use of the funds. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this information.. Unless Council objects, we will proceed with requesting an administrative determination from HUD to use these funds on Park Central Square.

Cc: Greg Burris, City Manager
Brenda Cirtin, City Clerk

Quarry Site at National and Trafficway



From Trafficway, view looking NW 11/5/09



From National Ave. view looking SW 11/5/09